



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

SOME ETHICAL GAINS OF THE WAR

SHAILER MATHEWS

University of Chicago

The ethics of *a* war are not to be confused with the ethics of war. Abstractly considered, the ethical problem of war is simple enough. It is a social evil to be condemned. We have fought a war in order to end war. If morality were a matter of abstract ideas, and if the formulation of an ideal meant its achievement, we might well leave the discussion of war to the classrooms of university lecturers, there to find companionship with ideas, rights, and world-spirits. But morality is not abstract. Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as morality. What really exists is folks who are constantly getting into trouble with other folks and trying to prevent the recurrence of the consequences.

The first impression which this war makes upon many persons is that of a world running amuck through morality. The very fact that men are fighting has so filled the eyes of idealists with tears that they have been unable to see the aims for which men fight. This war, they lament, like war in the abstract, is a denial of morality. If men had been really moral they would not have fought. The Germans would have listened to the sweet reasonableness of a shipload of miscellaneous pacifists, and the United States would have abandoned exports and sea voyages and devoted itself to an epistolary exposition of sweetness and light!

Even those whose eyes have not been so accustomed to seeing the invisible

as to be able to see men at least as trees walking, have felt something like despair as they have looked on a world in arms. Systematized atrocity, organized massacre, nationalized slavery, starvation through peace treaties, certainly make the impression that the reign of morals has closed. It is hard indeed to see that the German policy is itself an expression of an ethical theory which argues not so much of the end of morality as of the attempt to build up a different sort of morality from that which the rest of the world is evolving.

The same can be said of the less abhorrent but more fundamental fact that morals have difficulty in passing a national boundary. Up to a line which separates one nation from another certain groups of customs and laws prevail. Beyond that line they do not prevail. On one side of the line are friends; on the other side are enemies. On one side of the line men are to be treated humanely; on the other side they are to be treated according to the demands of military necessity. Some have questioned whether all is fair in love, but the war has shown a damnable belief on the part of the Central Powers that all is fair in war.

And there are more widespread sources of concern. War in itself releases evils which peace restrains. The necessity of brutality, the use of force to the utmost, the reduction of individuals to cogs in huge, collective

machines, the cultivation of passions universally condemned in social relations, the disregard of human suffering, the constant desire to injure others—all these are the outcome of war. They will demand moral reconstruction and cause new problems, if not dangers, in the epoch upon which we have entered.

But lamentation is a luxury of the hopeless. As the war sinks into perspective this superficial journalistic view will yield to a truer social estimate, and the war will be seen to be (1) a revelation of the moral forces and philosophies embodied in social institutions and policies as well as (2) the starting-point of a new epoch in the development of social evolution, which is only another way of describing morality itself. Without denying the ethical losses wrought by the war, I wish to limit attention to some of the ethical gains made during these tragic years.

I. Moral Tendencies in National Life Revealed by the War

1. *Considered in the large, the present war has shown a moral order in history.*—International policies have not been developed in the vacuum of abstract theory. They have dealt with wheat fields, oil wells, coal mines, uninhabited territories, oceans, and climate. I should be among the last to bow before economic determinism. That, like every philosophy of history, seems to me to be altogether too simple. Its weakness has been displayed in amazing proportions in this war itself. National morale is not to be reduced to chemistry and physics. This war is due to the working of human personalities. Economic resources alone no more produce history

than chemical elements produce plants. You cannot find a physical formula for Nietzsche and Treitschke, Prussian and Turk. But human nature operates in the midst of physical forces, and since the sixteenth century international relations have been increasingly affected by commercial motives.

If no sociologist of the future, unless he dwells detached among his books, can ignore economic struggle, just as true is it that no historian, unless he be one of the sort which looks upon history as an infinite number of doctors' theses united by a card catalogue, can see in human progress merely the aggregate activity of peripatetic chemical laboratories driven by the sex instinct. The war has shown that men are persons, and that nations are dependent upon persons.

Personal action, however, whether on the part of individuals or on the part of groups like nations, has organized its general principles of action in a most unsymmetrical fashion. Nations too often have been incapable of focalized vision. They have, as it were, fixed one eye on heaven and one eye on wealth. The present war has shown the abyss into which such pathological vision can bring the world. The detached observer need have no difficulty in these days in discovering that national policy, like individual practice, is not outside the law of cause and effect. The war has sharply divided nations into those subject to an inner urge toward respect for the rights of others and those who are moral anachronisms, yielding to the backward pull of policies worthy of Sennacherib and Genghis Khan. The war is clearly caused by antisocial

actions of the past. Untangle from the mass of facts that make up diplomatic history the foreign policy of any nation and the operation of a moral order is apparent. Its Turkish policy, already repudiated, of Great Britain, the Balkan policy of Austria, the Russian policy toward Poles and Finns, the German policy toward the world, have reaped their harvest in this war. Injustice on the part of any nation sooner or later finds its Nemesis. Whatever may be his theological predilections, the historian can see that the wages of sin is death.

Particularly is this law of social retribution seen in the case of Germany. Never in the history of international affairs has injustice so relentlessly and immediately been followed by its own punitive results. The injustice of Germany to Serbia made Russia her enemy. Her injustice to Belgium armed England. The violation of international law through the submarine was the occasion that brought the United States into the war. Her manipulation of Bulgaria and the justification of the policy of massacre by Turkey cost Germany the control of the Near East. The unrighteous treaties forced upon Russia and Roumania made inevitable the rise of the Slav states, the disintegration of the Austrian Empire, and the end of a German Middle Europe. The persistent brutal treatment of Belgians and Frenchmen made it impossible for any nation to trust the government of Germany, and fixed beyond recall the need of resting a peace of justice upon the reduction of the empire to an innocuous military power. The present revolution in the German states followed

inevitably. Such facts make the denial of a moral order and the workings of a God of justice in history beyond my comprehension.

2. *The war has developed the non-political agencies of social service.*—It is necessary only to mention the wonderful work of such organizations as the Red Cross, the Young Men's Christian Association, and the Knights of Columbus.

These organizations gain importance as they are seen to be illustrations of a new moral attitude toward human suffering. They belong in a realm of humanitarianism which has been only recently occupied in any intelligent and widespread fashion. The extraordinary effort to mitigate the miseries caused by war testifies to the persistence of a public opinion that leads to social action worthy of the Good Samaritan. This fact becomes the more significant when one recalls that the vast expression of altruism is the enlargement brought by war to habits and sympathies which were rapidly developing before the war. Men are still living who justified slavery on ethical grounds. The recognition of the rights of prisoners to something more than retribution and of the insane to something better than chains and strait-jackets is hardly older than the lives of some of our contemporaries. But the willingness and ability of the democratic peoples to give hundreds of millions of dollars to the support of the victims of national brutality, and now to undertake to alleviate the misery within the borders of Austria itself, evinces a consistency and spontaneity of moral attitude which never before have found self-expression.

This new humanitarian spirit has carried with it a new religious tolerance. The fraternal impulse has learned that there are moral values immensely superior to theological chauvinism. If the war had done nothing else than to bring about the hearty co-operation of Jew, Roman Catholic, and Protestant it would have shown that the Allies at least have turned a new leaf in their religious life. Just how far this new spirit has developed in Germany events do not disclose with sufficient distinctness to warrant description. The reports which reach us of the treatment of their prisoners and the desecration of the Red Cross by Germans argue that the same anachronistic nationalism which led the Germans to speak of a German God found expression in a tribal humanitarianism. The "old German God" does not seem regardful of hospitals belonging to the enemy. There is also something almost symbolic in the fact that while German shells have ruined the cathedral at Rheims and leveled the house in which Calvin was born at Noyon, the cathedral at Cologne and the house of Luther at Wittenberg stand unharmed.

3. *The war has shown that patriotism is of different sorts and of different moral values.*—There is a patriotism which has been developed among democracies since the eighteenth century. To a greater or less degree such nations have seen that they have a mission of helpfulness to those nations which are weaker. Mixed and imperfect as this better patriotism has doubtless been, limited too often by the hopes and fears and ambitions of anachronistic leaders, it has nevertheless embodied in its efforts for self-

protection a sense of the common interests existing between itself and other nations. It is necessary only to mention the patriotism of Germany to see contrary moral values. What commerce has a patriotism that seeks to enforce *kultur* by violence with that which in the very moment of a supreme sacrifice for self-protection helps weak nationalities realize their ambitions for self-determination in government and self-expression in language and culture?

The war has shown that those sections of the world already committed to the sense of co-operative well-being have united for common protection against nations obsessed with a patriotism of selfishness. They have fought for something more than territory and places in the sun. They are fighting for humanity. There are moral elements in policies like the Open Door in China and Great Britain's treatment of India and South Africa on the one side and the Germans' policy of *Mittel Europa* and the Austrians' treatment of the smaller Slavic nationalities on the other side. With such precedents we may trust democratic nations to establish peace on world-wide justice rather than upon national aggrandizement.

4. *The war has disclosed new ideals of justice as to the relation of economic and ethnic groups within nations.*—Who can fail to see the difference between the lot of the Bohemians, for instance, in Austria-Hungary and of Bohemians in the United States? between the status of the labor group in Germany and of that in France and Great Britain? The war has not caused these differences. It has brought them to light, intensified them, and assured each of a different

future. The social chaos of Russia is not born of war any more than is the labor program of England. Back of each there is a difference of moral ideals in social organization, economic life, and the political relations of classes.

Never before has the social solidarity of nations been so potent an element in national life. The fact that for the first time in history a war has been waged by nations rather than merely by armies has demanded national unity as the indispensable prerequisite of victory. The readjustment of the economic life of nations which has resulted has given sharp outline to economic and social inequalities as well as to social tendencies which were already recognized in peace. In the political field this has already found expression in the emancipation of nationalities oppressed by the dynastic empire of Austria-Hungary. The collapse of that anachronistic and ghostly empire has been due to the breaking of restraints as national aspirations have developed among the oppressed Slav peoples. Political injustice has here met as relentless a Nemesis as the political injustice in Russia. In Germany also there is every reason to believe that, whatever may be the final political status of the empire, some of its political inequalities have been or will be rectified. Whether or not the German people are capable of a thoroughgoing constitutional revolution time alone can show. But despite our suspicions of any genuine change of heart by those now controlling German politics, political revolt is already in progress.

Far more evident and significant, however, have been the gains of the working classes in Great Britain and

the United States. The century-long experience of these nations in representative government has given rise to genetic changes which limit the control of the capitalistic group. The program of the Labor party in England and the political influence of organized labor in the United States have not, strictly speaking, been caused by the war. They are the result of the rapid development of forces which have been operating in democratic nations for half a century at least. He would be a hopelessly doctrinaire interpreter of this social revolution who saw in it only economic forces. Back of them is the moral demand for rights. But there is more. Mazzini in his prophetic essay on "Faith and the Future" rightly forecasts the time when revolution shall mean, not simply the gaining of rights, but the establishing of duties as well. True, Mazzini failed to grasp the social significance of that great law of association he so passionately and majestically expounded, but he saw with a vision clearer than that of any man of his day the moral and the religious side of the universal struggle for political equality. Looking back over the years which separate us from the Italy he sought to inspire, we can see that political rights and duties lead inevitably to social and economic rights and duties. Genuine democracy as opposed to the democracy of program has increasingly given wider scope to his fundamental principles. The exigencies of war have forced men of the more privileged classes to see the justice of many an economic sacrifice which it might have taken long years of struggle to teach. It is not simply that we have learned to limit our use

of sugar and wheat and meat and gasoline and fuel in the interests of winning the war. This self-imposed sacrifice has a moral significance in terms of justice which America at first unwillingly and then whole-heartedly learned.

There have been other lessons in the human values of labor which we shall never unlearn. The rights of the laboring man and the laboring woman to shorter hours, safe housing conditions, opportunity for recreation, and a wage that shall make life something more than a No Man's Land between subsistence and starvation have become more generally recognized than would have been possible in four years of peace. The extent to which this readjustment of economic classes will go no one can foresee, but there are few if any nations who have failed to learn some new appreciation of the moral issues which lie within economic struggles; and they have been taught that when once a moral issue has been formulated, and even to a small degree met, reversion to less righteous conditions is at the peril of revolution.

5. *The war has shown that reparation is not revenge.*—It is true that some persons, especially those who themselves have had no share in actual fighting, desire to inflict retributive suffering on Germany. Such an attitude of mind is intelligible, for no man with any human sympathy can read the Bryce report or the heart-breaking messages from Serbia and Armenia without loathing and indignation. Forgiveness that permits a criminal to continue to prey upon his victim is immoral. There must be criminal trials and punishment for those both high and low who have been guilty

of the unspeakable atrocities of Germany. But such expressions of political leaders as have come to us from across the Atlantic show that Englishmen and Frenchmen see that the punishment of criminal individuals is not to be identified with wreaking vengeance on a nation which has been disarmed. Peace must be as noble as our entrance into the war. To make Germany powerless to commit again its fearful transgressions and to compel her as far as is humanly possible to restore the countries she has devastated, to replace the ships she has sunk, and to give bonds that she will live like a modern state is not to be vindictive. The moral sense of nations outraged by four years of national criminality demands nothing less. For the Allies to attempt anything less would be like sending flowers to murderers. We want no good-natured peace.

But national lynch law can have no place in a peace worthy of democracy. The Golden Rule has never been popular with diplomats and conquering generals, but democracies that have learned even imperfectly to establish political and social justice within their own boundaries may be trusted to leave a monopoly of Brest-Litovsk and Roumanian treaties, Belgian deportations, and Armenian massacres to a foe they have made impotent to repeat its crimes. We dare not permit the Prussianism we have conquered to conquer the soul of democracy.

6. *The war has disclosed a growing community of moral sentiment among democratic nations.*—In the storm and stress of the present moment it is difficult to characterize impartially the pacifist movement of pre-war days. Even a

detached estimate of the peace movement finds us between the horns of a dilemma. On the one side we condemn our blindness, and on the other side we admire our moral idealism. The spread of opposition to war through democratic countries was a natural and hopeful result of democracy. Nations were beginning to live like gentlemen. Their failure to realize the danger from the scientific highwaymanship of Germany was unpardonable, but it should not be allowed to weaken the moral sense that was endeavoring to end militarism. Paradoxical as it may sound, the war itself is in no small degree due to the pacifist movement. Having once had their minds awakened to the fact of war, the most pacifist nations—France, Great Britain, and the United States—have outfought the militaristic nations. They mean to end war by ending the causes and champions of war.

But pacifism was only one element in the new moral sense relative to international affairs which was developing before the war. Democratic nations were learning to give justice as well as to demand rights. Arbitration was actually in operation. If it had not been for this new community of moral hopes born of the years of peace, democracies could not have fought this war with such unanimity of spirit and such high resolve. Germany shocked this new moral feeling by her ruthlessness, her Nietzschean worship of force. The world saw that it was involved in a struggle between two ages. Morality faced brutal non-morality. Self-sacrifice has ennobled nations as well as their citizens. We have consecrated our sons to that issue. They have not fought

for land or money; they have fought for the ideals of a better social order. The hope with which we now look into the future is in no small degree based upon this world-morale which the war has developed and intensified. The moral order has given birth to international ideals.

II. Can There Be a National Morality?

These moral forces which have been revealed and occasioned by the war bring us face to face with a problem of the deepest import, to which history can give no answer: Is it possible for a nation to have a morality?

Nothing has been more common than the assertion by religious people that the same moral laws which obtain among individuals ought also to obtain among nations. Nations, we have been told, like individuals, ought not to kill or steal, lie, or covet their neighbors' possessions. They ought to be fraternal and sacrificial, more eager to give justice than to fight for rights. The Golden Rule ought to be the law of nations as truly as of individuals.

1. *When does a nation do wrong?*—The lover of his kind cannot object to such ideals, but they are very general. When one is asked just what constitutes a firm basis for the morality of nations, the answer is not quite at hand. It is very difficult to formulate in detail an absolutely just national policy on the basis of individual morality. Take, for example, the command that individuals shall not kill. Is that binding on a nation which, like France, has been attacked by a nation seeking to rob it of its citizens, territory, and wealth?

The Germans ought not to have started their fatal adventure into the realms of highway robbery, but they invaded Belgium. Had Belgium or any other nation any obligation to submit passively to their brutalities? A nation is under obligation to protect for its future citizens the blessings of its civilization and political institutions. But the question still arises, When does a nation become criminal? Was Italy criminal in its endeavor to obtain *Italia Irredenta*? Was Bulgaria criminal in its endeavor to recover the territory taken from it after the second Balkan war? Was the United States criminal in its acquisition of the Philippines?

In raising these questions I have no intention of implying that these various acquisitions of territory involve the same national policies. To my mind they differ radically, but they show the lack of moral standards for national actions.

The ground of the difficulty is not hard to find. For upon what is a moral attitude based? In the case of an individual the social will is so clearly recognized and has in the process of thousands of years been so thoroughly organized as to make it by no means difficult to distinguish between the conventional antisocial man and the good citizen. But even in the case of individual morality it is not altogether clear just where a man's action ceases to become antisocial. Was a corporation a criminal when it violated the anti-Sherman Act? If so, what shall we say of the United States government in its handling of the railroads?

Individuals are members of some group which has evolved standards of social action and has given sanction to

social decisions regarding the actions of individuals. I am not speaking here of merely legal sanctions. The anti-social qualities of certain acts have undoubtedly been sometimes recognized by law in advance of that superlegal activity of the individual which is born of an intelligent perception of the value of custom. And conversely it is true that many an act which is condemned as antisocial by an intelligent person, and therefore judged to be wrong, has maintained its respectability in the courts of law. The abolitionist appealed to a law higher than the Constitution. And in time the Constitution was amended. But in both cases the individual finds himself subordinated to social judgments and habits, the violation of which brings to him not only the punishment of the group but also that inner disturbance which we call conscience.

But conscience has no absolute standard regarding the permissibility of certain acts. What we call the moral law is not a sort of museum catalogue of labeled rights and wrongs. It is rather the reaction of society upon the individual who violates what experience has led society to regard as rules of conduct to which all of its members must conform. However fully we may admit the existence of a moral sense in mankind as one of the distinguishing marks which separate men from animals, morality as a definite activity is due to the extension of standardized social judgments to the action of individuals composing any group. It may be that the development of individual morality is not due exclusively to the fear of punishment, but the influence of custom and of general social judgments is one of the distinguishing

elements of the social life into which individuals have been born. Group control, whether it be in the outer statutes of law or in the inner and apparently intuitive responses of the individual to the structural habits of his group, is undoubtedly a factor in what we call the morality of individuals. Historically speaking, morality is based upon *mores*, and *mores* is a term expressive of social control sometimes even more absolute than the control of laws.

2. *Upon what can national morality be based?*—When therefore we are told that the moral ideals of the individual ought to be the ideals of a nation we must needs ask what there is in the relations of nations corresponding to this group-will upon which individual morality is based. The answer is admittedly hard to find. There is no group possessed of sufficient solidarity to impress a group-will upon individual nations.

In reply to such a statement it may be said that the nation is itself a social individual, and that its actions must be defined by the general law of the greatest good to the greatest number. To revert to our illustration, in the case of a nation's killing members of other nations, it may be argued that such a violation of elementary morality is no more pronounced than the admitted right of a state to inflict capital punishment upon those whose action is judged to be fatal to the well-being of the state. But such a reply is really no reply, for it finds justification of state action against foreigners in its right to kill those within its own boundaries. The state is superior to all its members, but to say that in its relations with others it

needs only to consult its own highest good is to justify the philosophy of the German state. Justice, to the Prussian state philosopher, is a civic virtue. The supreme rule in the relations of nations to others is that of force. Since they are not members of the German nation, foreigners have no rights that the state must recognize in its actions.

The war has sufficiently demonstrated that such a view is nothing more nor less than antisocial action in national affairs—in other words, a malignant anarchy in which the individual nation is self-sufficient in its choice of action and indifferent to any claims to recognize the rights of other nations. With such an outlook and political philosophy no other course of action could be expected from the German nation than that which the war has disclosed. To call it morality is to misuse terms. It is a frank and unequivocal denial of the possibility of morality in the relations of national individuals.

But already we see the beginning of international *mores* in international law. True, the present war has disillusioned us as regards international law. Here again the absence of anything like group control possessed of sanction is apparent. International law is hardly more than a mass of agreements concerning the mitigation of war and the organization of international courtesy. It is true that we had thought that it was more than this, but anyone who has followed closely the various peace conferences at The Hague and the decisions of The Hague Tribunal will have to admit that our optimism was based upon too generous an interpretation of actual accomplishments. Here again Germany has

been consistent. At the same moment that in practice it has not hesitated to violate any of the supposed standard actions of international law, its political philosophers, like Kohler, have said that there was no such thing as international law, and, further, that there could be no such thing until Germany, the state of strength and conscience, was able to impress its will upon the entire world.

But fortunately this is not the last word upon the subject. In what we call international law we have a germinal international morality. Unsafe as the analogy may be, international law may be regarded as something akin to the beginnings of individual morality in primitive societies. It is a stage in that development of custom which has been in process ever since the rise of modern nations. The Middle Ages knew nothing of it, unless we include under the term the so-called Laws of War, which were little better than the German practices of the present day, or the Truce of God, which a church struggling against the brutalities of its day partially enforced among warriors. From this point of view such international law as we actually possess appears the choicest precipitate of human civilization. Without sanction it rests upon such response of the better moral nature of mankind to national action as states have deemed it practicable to permit. The Great War gets moral significance from the fact that in the case of at least some of the nations fighting to protect themselves against the anarchy of Teutonic policy it involved an attempt to preserve and protect habits and customs approved by a moral sense. I need

here refer only to the recognition of the rights of noncombatants, of civilian travelers upon the sea, and of neutrals, as well as the hesitation with which the Allies and the United States have undertaken the practice of reprisals. Among the accusations which an indignant world hurls at the Germans none more expresses an enlightened social mind than that which protests against the violation of treaties and the organized murder of noncombatants in submarine warfare.

The war thus presents a new hope.

The new moral idealism to which reference has already been made as one of the accomplishments of pre-war society, the slow and hesitating development of international customs without legal sanction, is leading to the formation of an international group that shall stand related to its component nations as an organized society stands related to the individuals composing it.

Three facts of the utmost importance are here already discernible. The first is the rapid development among nations trained in the ways of democracy of a reliance upon arbitration in the settlement of international disagreements. It is no accident that of the approximately two hundred and thirty bipartied treaties in existence in 1914—not counting the “bide a wee” treaties of Mr. Bryan—only one had been made by the German Empire. The conception of international relations which war has disclosed as a part of German policy made arbitration a thing to be avoided and opposed. It is true that in the case of the United States the attempts of President Taft to bring about a further development of the practice of arbitration were prevented by men who should

have known better, and who at the present time are still opposing any genuinely international handling of justiciable questions. But actual results have been accomplished. Particularly is this true in the case of the two nations which are most thoroughly alike in political idealism and their outlook upon international relations—Great Britain and the United States. The hundred years and more of peace which mark their relations have seen the development of an attitude of mind which is prophetic of still further progress. For this century of peace has not been a century of peaceableness. The two nations have disputed and quarreled over almost every issue about which other nations have gone to war. There is not a foot of our northern boundary which has not threatened trouble; there is not a codfish on the banks of Newfoundland which has not submitted to arbitration. But the two nations have not fought. One may well admit that the recourse to arbitration has not always been due to the highest motives, but, whatever the motives, precedents have been established, and precedents are the forerunners of agreements that are more than paper programs.

The second fact of importance is the existing association—one might wish that a stronger term could be used—of the twenty or more nations engaged in the great struggle. Such an association for mutual defense is the expression of something more than a sense of common danger. It is as truly an expression of the inner force of social evolution and world-progress as appeared in the struggle of the North with the South. Today, as in 1865, victory

is more than a victory of military forces. It is the inevitable outcome of social evolution. Germany has been fighting the forces of history themselves, and in this conflict it was doomed as certainly as a stone thrown into the air is destined to fall to the earth. A reactionary nation has sometimes defeated a progressive nation; but no reactionary nation can defeat a progressive world. History is headed toward justice; and justice between nations as between individuals is a social virtue.

The third fact is the growing recognition of the necessity of a League of Nations to make war, if not impossible, at least difficult. From the point of view of the present discussion such a League of Nations is more than a military alliance, more than an opportunity to use economic and military forces to delay a nation in its declaration of war. It is the groundwork of an international morality. In it lies the possibility of building up a group which shall give sanction to the will of a group regarding its component individuals, which are nations themselves. It is this which makes the numerous and widespread proposals for such a league so significant for the future of human society. The morality of nations is not a matter of sentiment and ideals alone. It needs group action to enforce customs and rules. We have had alliances to maintain the balance of power and to combat common enemies. They lacked large moral significance because they did not undertake to establish the rules of international relations. They were the vigilantes of international history. What the world demands now and will undoubtedly have is the incorporation of

the experience of these four years in a League of Nations which shall carry within itself the power, not only to prevent war, but to establish a court of international appeal with sufficient power to enforce its decisions, at least as far as war is concerned. The proposal of the League to Enforce Peace is a step forward in the moral life of the human race. As primitive societies organized customs and regulations for savage life, as the peoples of antiquity carried forward this primitive life into organized states, so now the experience of nations in the development of constitutional life within their own borders can be extended into relations between states. Our own history furnishes lessons which nations may appropriate and adapt to a world that in some respects is already more closely unified in commercial and social interests than were the thirteen American states in 1787. International customs, a group of nations fighting to defend such customs, an organized internationalism to enforce international law—these are the three stages in the development of a real morality. The first steps in the development of such a League of Nations must necessarily be conservative, even tentative, but despite the vociferations of extreme nationalists it is the one hope, not only of permanent peace, but of that national

morality for which this war has not only shown the need but laid the foundations. To the consummation of this hope, so admirably expressed by President Wilson, all those who would not camouflage German imperialism under democracy must look, and for it they must patiently but with determination labor. Having won a war for democracy we owe it to those who have sanctified victory with their life-blood to see that our own nation maintains in peace the ideals for which they died in war.

Such an advance step has its difficulties. That must be granted. But the past four years have shown us not only difficulties but tragedies in a world in which no basis for a national morality exists. We must, however, look not merely at the tragedies but at the constructive forces which the war has disclosed. The first step into the epoch in which there shall be the basis of a genuine morality for a nation has been taken. We already have a group of nations giving sanction to an incipient international law. If it should seem a forecast of Utopia to predict that this association of free nations shall develop into a group sufficiently united in spirit to enforce an international will upon its members, the alternative is unendurable. For my own part I prefer to plan for Utopia rather than for hell.